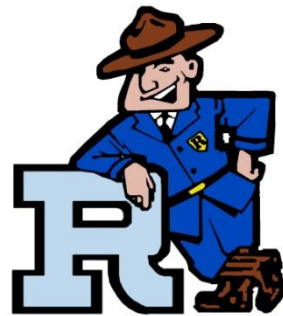




# Cheer Squad Handbook

2021-2022



## **VUSD CHEER SQUAD PHILOSOPHY**

The Visalia Unified School District believes that an athletic program provides opportunity for students to acquire tools for lifelong personal growth and fulfillment of potential. These tools include self-discipline, ability to work as part of a team, perseverance, desire to play fair, and grace in winning and losing. Furthermore, lifelong participation in physical activity is valuable for physical and mental health and fitness.

In order to provide the greatest benefit to participants, Visalia Unified School District will provide adult role models who exemplify the kind of behavior and leadership to be developed from the program. The district also commits to provide, within the limits of available resources, the broadest range of recreational and competitive programs for all who wish to participate.

While the district takes great pride in winning, we do not condone “winning at any cost” and discourage any and all pressures, which lead to poor sportsmanship and neglect good physical and mental health. At all times, the athletic program will be conducted in a way that is complementary and supportive of the educational program at Visalia Unified School District.

## **VUSD CHEER SQUAD HANDBOOK**

It is an honor and privilege to be selected as a member of the VUSD Cheer Program. Being a member of this squad requires a tremendous amount of dedication, time, and personal responsibility that other activities may not require; consequently, a student must be cooperative and self-disciplined.

This handbook was prepared to help parents and students understand what will be expected of a VUSD High School Cheer Squad member. We are looking forward to working with you this year and hope this will be a most memorable high school experience. We are available to assist you in any area of concern regarding the Cheer Program.

Statement of Purpose:

- To provide positive school spirit
- To foster leadership and teamwork skills
- To provide a positive role model
- To support all athletic and co-curricular activities
- To provide opportunities to participate and perform

## **Tryout Procedures**

In order to declare your candidacy for cheerleading, you must complete the following steps:

Eligibility to try out: Your Cumulative GPA and Session 4 GPA must be at least a 2.0. Your report card must also be at least a 2.0 on your 4<sup>th</sup> grading session which coaches will verify prior to tryouts.

You must bring the following forms to the designee in the Attendance Office before 4:00 p.m. on the date to be announced. Only students with completed applications will be allowed to go through the try out process

1. Tryout Application Form #1
2. Parent and Student Agreement Form #2
3. School Officials Clearance Form #3
4. Assumption of Potential Risk Form #4

You must attend all try out clinic dates, or you will not be allowed to try out. If you cannot attend, you must check with the advisors to check if it will be excused. **\*\*Mandatory attendance for all clinic dates!!!**

### **\*\*Tryouts\*\***

#### **Tryout Attire:**

For tryouts, you must wear a white T shirt, school color, black colored shorts, tennis shoes & your number which will be provided. Hair must be up in a ponytail with no bangs. No jewelry of any kind and no cheer attire (shirts, shorts or shoes from prior cheer participation).

You must cooperate with whoever is conducting the practice sessions. Failure to do so will result in being eliminated from the tryout process. Tryouts will be closed to the public.

The results of the tryouts will be posted the next day on the outside of the main office.

#### **Squad Structure (max. 40 – Athletes/Students)**

**Junior Varsity** : May be a freshman, sophomore, or junior with 2.0 GPA or better. All Junior Varsity applicants will be expected to demonstrate jumps (toe touch, pike, right and left herkies, etc.), motion technique, dance ability, tumbling (if applicable). To try out for JV you must be able to commit to games and practices, as the squad will be very demanding of your time.

**Varsity Cheer**: May be a freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior with a 2.0 GPA or better. All Varsity Cheer applicants will be expected to demonstrate jumps (toe touch, pike, right and left herkies, etc.), motion technique, dance ability, tumbling (if applicable). To try out for Varsity Cheer you must be able to commit to games and practices, as the squad will be even more demanding of your time than at the Junior Varsity level. Varsity Cheer will be learning much more material throughout the year at a more rapid pace than on the JV team.

#### **General Rules**

- A. All squad members are expected to respect the leadership of the coaches and captains during all practices and performances. Attitudes are to be left at home. You are to be friendly and courteous to each other at all times. No gossiping, criticism, or use of

abusive language will be tolerated. If you are being uncooperative and unruly during practice, you may be asked to leave and will be given an unexcused absence for the practice. Attitudes that show laziness, poor sportsmanship, and otherwise negative behavior will not be tolerated and are causes for suspension or removal from squad.

- B. All Cheer Squad members must have an athletic clearance including a physical exam by a doctor before they can participate. The clearance must be completed and placed on file with the school nurse and Athletic Director no later than June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- C. Cheer Squad members needing to wear orthopedic braces or having other problems which might become a factor during practices or games must bring a written note from their doctor to the advisor explaining when the brace is to be worn and/or other special instructions.
- D. Cheer Squad candidates must have a 2.0 grade point average or better in the grading period prior to the tryout and must have a satisfactory standing in citizenship with Assistant Principal approval. Squad members must maintain eligibility to remain on the squad.
- E. Cheer Squad members must remember that they are responsible for their behavior under the Visalia Unified School District activity code that they have signed.
- F. Excessive absences, tardiness, or unacceptable behavior may result in disciplinary action/removal or referral to school administration.
- G. For practice, squad members will wear approved clothing and will wear it as was designed (i.e. no rolling of shorts, no tying up shirts, etc...).
- H. Cheer Squad members who are not properly groomed for all performances may be removed from the performance.
  - 1. Hair must be styled neatly and out of the eyes for the entire performance. Hair will be neatly pulled back in a ponytail with the required bow.
    - a. No jewelry will be worn (i.e. earrings, rings, necklaces, bracelets, belly button rings, anklets, toe rings). No facial piercings---No Exceptions.
    - b. Fingernails will be kept trimmed as a safety precaution, with no colored polish (must not be seen above the tip of the finger). No acrylic nails. Exceptions may be made during the week of formal with prior approval from advisor.

### **Summer Practices (may vary by site)**

- A. Summer practices will begin in June and continue until school starts. Practices may be scheduled for mornings or evenings, depending upon the discretion of the coaches and the advisor.
- B. Students may be excused from one week of summer practice if a member is on a family vacation. One week notification must be given to the appropriate advisor. Summer

vacation is limited to five practice days. These days may not be during the time of cheer camp.

- C. School trips may be excused if one week notification has been given to the appropriate advisor.
- D. Practices will be held two to three times a week and they may run as long as three hours. Additional practices, including some weekends, may be required. All members must stay for the entire practice time unless prior arrangements have been made with the advisor one week in advance.
- E. Excessive absences or tardiness from summer practices may result in dismissal from the squad. If a squad member misses 40% of the scheduled summer practices, that squad member may be dismissed from the squad.
- F. Squad members are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from all practices.

### **Summer Camp**

- A. All Cheer Squad members are encouraged to attend Cheer Camp (either on campus or in another city).
- B. Camp is one of the most important and exciting events that the squad will participate in during the year. Camp provides the students with new ideas and techniques for cheer while helping to improve leadership skills. Squad members will have the opportunity to get to know their group as well as many other students from all over California.
- C. All squad members are required to wear camp uniforms.

### **Strength Training**

- A. With intention of avoiding injuries to squad members throughout the year, it is important that a conditioning and weight training program be recommended.
- B. With the increase in the role that gymnastics and stunting plays in cheer programs, it is vital that all squad members be in the best physical shape possible. Strength training will help squad members develop strength and flexibility and maintain their ideal body composition.

### **Attendance and Tardiness**

- A. Cheerleading is a group activity and the success of the group is only as strong as the weakest link. If poor attendance of an individual is a hindrance to the progress of the squad, they may be suspended or released from the program.
- B. Practice and Game Attendance: Attendance by Cheer Squad members at assigned events is absolutely mandatory. Lack of attendance by a member prevents the group from functioning as a total unit. Only an illness or family emergency will be considered an

acceptable reason for non-attendance. Notification of the absence must be provided to the appropriate coaches/advisor.

- C. Participants must attend all periods of school on the date of an activity in order to be eligible to participate. If the event takes place on a non-student attendance day, the student must attend all periods the day prior to the event. The principal or designee may grant a waiver of this requirement for appropriate reasons prior to event.
- D. Job obligations are not considered an excused absence. Driver's training/education and/or other classes are not considered excused absences.
- E. School Attendance: Attendance in school will be checked and applied accordingly to suspend/remove squad members who have poor attendance. Regular school attendance is a requirement for all squad members. Any student with excessive absences from school will be reviewed and put on an attendance contract. If the contract is broken, the squad member will be dismissed from the squad.
- F. At the discretion of the coaches/advisor, a squad member who is late twice to practice may not be allowed to perform at the next game or scheduled event.
- G. Team captains may be chosen for each level of cheer. These squad members must have excellent attendance and present a good leadership example. They will work directly with all cheer coaches/advisors.
- H. All Cheer Squad members are required to support their school by attending meetings and working closely with the sponsors and officers for rallies and other activities.
- I. Fall and Winter comprise the regular cheer season; therefore, the squad will be your first commitment. These squad members may try out for a Spring sport.
- J. When a student's participation in a school-sponsored event conflicts with a scheduled Cheer Squad practice, game, performance, or other event, it is the student's responsibility to notify both the cheer advisor and the coach/advisor/teacher in charge of the conflicting event as soon as the conflict is known. Both coaches and student will meet and make a good faith effort to work out a compromise. If a workable compromise is not found, the student's first commitment is to the Cheer Squad. The decision of the coaches may be appealed to the school Athletic Director. The decision of the Athletic Director is final.

### **Discipline Step System**

- A. Warnings and suspensions are given to Cheer Squad members who:
  - 1. Are out of complete uniform at school.
  - 2. Do not have the correct equipment with them (lipstick, gloves, poms, megaphones, etc...) at games.
  - 3. Demonstrate irresponsibility as determined by coaches/advisors.
- B. Minor violations of the cheer rules and guidelines consist of: unexcused absences, poor attitude, unsatisfactory conduct, tardiness, uniform violations, and/or irresponsibility as determined by coaches/advisor (Progressive Discipline Step System).

1. Cursing, unsportsmanlike conduct.
  2. Failure to remove jewelry, throw away gum, or unauthorized cell phone use.
  3. Being disrespectful to fellow teammates, coaches, teachers or administrators.
- C. Procedures for handling minor violations of the cheer contract/code of ethics are as follows:
1. First violation: warning and possible game suspension.
  2. Second violation: parent contact and two-day suspension from cheer squad.
  3. Third violation: parent contact and one-week suspension from cheer squad.
  4. Fourth violation: parent contact and two-week suspension from cheer squad.
  5. Fifth violation: removal from cheer squad.
- D. Major violations of the cheer contract/code of ethics may result in a suspension or dismissal from the squad. The severity of the violation and the previous disciplinary record of the Cheer Squad member will dictate the disciplinary action that will be taken.
- E. Suspension or Removal from Cheer Squad

Incidents which are also contrary to VUSD conduct code or CIF rules will result in appropriate discipline action which may include removal from the cheerleading squad. Appeal process for the Student Conduct Code may be appealed through the Athletic Director.

### **Uniforms/Fundraising**

- A. Uniforms must be kept clean and in good condition at all times.
- B. Uniforms are to be worn only when assigned by the advisor.
- C. Do not loan uniforms and equipment to members of the crowd.
- D. When in uniform, all assigned items must be worn.
- E. Game uniforms and sweats are not to be worn for practice.

VUSD High School Cheer program will provide each cheerleader with a standard uniform which consists of: 1 long sleeve top, 1 short sleeve top, 1 skirt, and 1 set of poms. For those who would like to purchase additional “personalized items” and/or keep the cheer uniform at the end of the season, we have developed several option packages:

The following Options and prices are estimates and based on 2021-2022 Current Catalog pricing. Additionally, schools may offer above and beyond what is listed below.

Option A\_\_\_ \$0 School issued uniform

Option B\_\_\_ (\$575) Spirit pack: shoes, camp, sweats

Option C\_\_\_ (\$975) Spirit pack: shoes, camp, sweats, bag, and new uniform

Option D\_\_\_ Spirit pack: shoes, camp, sweats, bag, uniform, combine (optional per site)

Orders will be taken on May 1, 2021 and initial payments due at that time. All option package prices must be paid in full by the due date in order to process your personalized item option package request. If the amount is not paid in full, the personalized items will not be ordered/delivered.

### Fundraising

We will hold fundraisers through the year to help defray the costs of personalized items ordered/purchased.

\_\_\_\_\_ Option A

I wish to take advantage of Option A only. I understand that the school will check out a standard uniform which consists of: 1 long sleeve top, 1 short sleeve top, 1 skirt, and 1 set of poms and that I will be responsible for keeping the uniform in good repair and returning it to the school at the end of the season. I understand that I could be charged for any alterations or damage to the uniform or if I do not return the uniform.

For those who would like to purchase additional “personalized items” and/or keep the cheer uniform at the end of the season, we have developed several options.

I wish to order personalized items and would like to purchase the following options (*please check an option below*):

\_\_\_\_\_ Option B

\_\_\_\_\_ Option C

\_\_\_\_\_ Option D

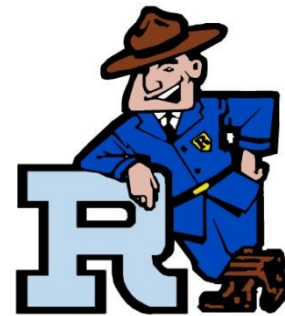
I agree and know that an initial payment is due at the time of ordering the personalized items in these option package prices must be paid in full by the due date in order to process my request. If the amount is not paid in full to the uniform company (through Parent Portal), the personalized items will not be ordered/delivered.

Revised: 6/1/21





Cheerleader Tryout Packet  
and  
Application Packet





## **Cheer Tryout**

### **Parent Letter**

Dear Parents:

Your student has expressed a desire to try out for the Pep Squad for the upcoming school year. As a cheerleader or a mascot, your student can develop leadership abilities, learn cheer performance routines, and enjoy performing at games, assemblies and other school events. However, being a cheerleader can also be very demanding and require an extreme amount of time and sacrifice for both your student and your family.

In order for the year to run smoothly, we as the advisors/coaches, feel that you, as parents, need to be informed of exactly what the responsibilities of being a Pep Squad member entails. We ask you to take some time to read through the attached pages and discuss them with your students. If you wish to grant permission for your student to participate in the Pep Squad tryouts, please sign in the required places indicated on the Tryout Application Form, Parent and Student Agreement Form, School Officials Clearance Form, and Assumption of Risk Form, which are located within this packet. You must bring all 4 of these completed forms to the designee in the school office by the required date.

Should your student make the squad, we would like to invite you to attend a parent informational meeting on the required date.

We wish you and your student luck, and look forward to working with him/her in the coming school year.

## CHEERLEADER TRYOUTS

### WHAT WE LOOK FOR – PERFORMANCE

	<u>POSITIVE</u>	<u>NEGATIVE</u>
POISE	Confidence, preparedness Smile, appearance, well-groomed	Shy, not prepared, no smile, doesn't have it together
ENTRANCE	Enthusiasm, smile, knows Beginning position	Intimidated, lost, no smile
SPIRIT	Enthusiastic, great energy and Excitement, plays to the crowd Good showmanship	Not excited, dull, introvert little or no showmanship
PROJECTION	Loud, clear words, strong Projection, excitement	Soft, muffled words, boring
PRECISION	Knows routine well, positions Sharp and correct, no bent wrists Good timing, toes pointed in jumps Tight and controlled movements, Good technique	Unprepared, sloppy Presentation, no technique, Timing off
ABILITY	Good memory for routines Learns quickly, ability to perform Knows good technique, good jumps Good tumbling skills, stays focused	Forgetful, doesn't have Good form, technique or Ability; no tumbling, no Focus

#### Applicants are responsible for:

1. Prompt attendance at mandatory parent meetings.
2. Prompt attendance at all practices.
3. Learning a cheer.
4. Learning a chant.
5. Learning a dance and learning jump momentum.
6. Arriving and being picked up ON TIME.
7. Submitting all paperwork and completed/signed forms.

Returning Varsity cheerleaders are required to participate in all tryout practices. Returning Varsity cheerleaders may be required to participate in tryouts depending on performance during tryout practices. Returning Varsity cheerleaders are not guaranteed a spot on the varsity squad.



### Tryout Application

Please complete all the information requested and obtain all necessary signatures for you to be able to participate in the VUSD Cheer Squad Tryout process.

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Student Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Parent e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

#### Parent's Signature

By signing below, I am giving permission for my child to try out for the Cheer Squad. I have read the information and I understand that my child must be able to commit to the time factor involved to be a cheerleader, is encouraged to participate in fundraisers, and must abide by all Cheer Rules and Regulations, the Activity Code, Conduct Code and Athletic Code.

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Student's Signature

By signing below, I am expressing my intent to try out for the Cheer Squad. I have read the information and I understand that I must be able to commit to the time factor involved to be a cheerleader, which I am encouraged to participate in fundraisers, and must abide by all Cheer Rules and Regulations, the Activity Code, Conduct Code and Athletic Code.

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Cheerleader Application  
Parent and Student Agreement Form**

Please sign only after you have read and have a complete understanding of the Cheerleading Handbook, and are willing to agree with and support its enforcement.

PARENT PERMISSION: \_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to try out for the Cheerleading Squad. I have read and understand the Cheerleading Handbook, and understand that if my child is selected for the squad, I agree to comply and to support the Handbook and its policies. I understand that if my student does not abide by the rules of the Handbook and loses his/her position on the squad, the money spent on camp, uniform and fundraising is not refundable. I also understand that fundraisers will be held to provide opportunities for cheerleaders to attend camp, and have spirit packs. Participating in camp and fundraising for spirit packs is optional and options are explained in the Parent/Cheerleader Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

.....  
  
CHEERLEADER OATH: I have carefully read and understand the Cheerleading Handbook, and if chosen as a member of the squad, I will abide by these rules and regulations. I recognize that cheerleading is a privilege, and that a cheerleader serves as a leader and a role model. I accept the responsibility to uphold the high standards of VUSD and pledge to follow all behavioral and school rules, and meet all uniform, attendance, and academic requirements. I further pledge to conduct myself at all times in a manner that promotes school spirit, character, unity, and sportsmanship. I agree to arrive and be picked up on time. Participating in camp and fundraising for spirit packs is optional and options are explained in the Parent/Cheerleader Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND ENCLOSED WITH CHEER APPLICATION.**



**SIGNATURES**  
**(School Officials)**

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

**ACADEMIC CLEARANCE**

Candidates must have a 2.0 grade point average or better the grading period prior to the tryouts and must have a satisfactory standing in citizenship. The above named student's grade point average for the grading period (Session 4) of the school year is \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

.....

**DISCIPLINE & ATTENDANCE CLEARANCE**

By signing this form, I am giving the above named student discipline/attendance clearance to try out for the VUSD Cheer Squad. Attendance report will be pulled for verification.

Number of days absent: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Tardies (YTD): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

.....

**FINANCIAL CLEARANCE**

The above named student does not have any outstanding bills at the school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**Voluntary Activity Participation Form  
Acknowledgment and Assumption of Potential Risk**

\_\_\_\_\_ wishes to participate in the district-sponsored activities of the Cheer Squad which will occur in the current school year.

I understand and acknowledge that these activities, by their very nature, pose the potential risk of serious injury/illness to individuals who participate in such activities.

I understand and acknowledge that some of the injuries/illnesses, which may result from participating in these activities, include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Sprains/strains
2. Fractured bones
3. Unconsciousness
4. Head and/or back injuries
5. Paralysis
6. Loss of eyesight
7. Communicable diseases
8. Death

I understand and acknowledge that participation in these activities is completely voluntary and as such is not required by the district.

I understand and acknowledge that in order to participate in these activities, I agree to assume liability and responsibility for any and all potential risks which may be associated with participation in such activities.

I understand, acknowledge, and agree that the district, its employees, officers, agents, or volunteers shall not be liable for any injury/illness suffered by me which is incident to and/or associated with preparing for and/or participating in this activity.

I acknowledge that I have carefully read this VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION FORM and that I understand and agree to its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE